

Grant, Elihu

Cuneiform documents in the
Smith college library

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Cuneiform Documents

in the

Smith College Library

By ELIHU GRANT
Professor in Haverford College

BIBLICAL AND KINDRED STUDIES, No. 1
HAVERFORD, PENNSYLVANIA
1918

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TO MY COLLEAGUES AT SMITH

I hoped to lay before you ere this the fruits of my sabbatical year, but delays which I could not prevent have hindered the appearance of the promised Yale Volume.

Meanwhile I am beginning a series of studies in the Smith College Library Collection which are offered to you with cordial esteem.



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CUNEIFORM DOCUMENTS IN THE SMITH COLLEGE LIBRARY

Smith College owns several hundred Babylonian tablets from the periods of the Ur and the First Babylonian dynasties, and from the time of the New Babylonian and Persian empires. Most of them are business and temple administrative documents, and there are a few letters, tags, memoranda and lists. There is one fine truncated cone of Nebuchadrezzar II, the conqueror of Jerusalem. (604-561 B. C.)

The incomes of the temples enabled them to do business on a large scale. These religious foundations owned lands, herds, flocks, boats on the canals, and employed many people. The book-keepers kept remarkable accounts of incomes and expenditures, drew up wage-lists, and appear to have compiled the contents of many smaller accounts in systematic form on large tablets with headings, rulings and columns. Tens of thousands of business documents, temple or private, have been recovered, and hundreds of thousands lie in the heaps or mounds of ruined cities of the past.

It seems worth while to place certain of the Smith College texts before Assyriologists and at the same time provide data which will be of interest to the users of the Library. The writer hopes to be enabled to publish further in these regions which might be described as biblical backgrounds.

Late in 1915 twenty-three tablets were secured from Dr. E. J. Banks. The dealers from whom he purchased them had indicated the sites in the old Babylonian country where the tablets were found, but Dr. Banks passed on this information with considerable question. The places as named were Tell Habil Ibrahim, Abu Hatab, Abu Khameez, and Abu Nekhla.

The tablets are dated, eleven in the reign of Samsuiluna, others variously, Hammurabi, Rim Sin, Abi-eshu', Ammiditana, etc., and several unplaced. The group was numbered B '15. 1 to B '15. 23, and bear the serial numbers from 252 to 274 in the Smith catalogue.

The more technical treatment of the problems involved in the tablets is reserved for special articles. An article on names is in preparation, also one, not by the present writer, on dates and chronology.

When these tablets were written the older Sumerian language (non-Semitic) was passing out of colloquial use, though it was often used in monumental inscriptions and in religious and legal phraseology. The tablets are therefore found in either Sumerian or Semitic Babylonian or in a combination of the two.

The city of Babylon was ruled from 2225 to 1926 B. C. by a dynasty of eleven Semitic kings. The sixth and mightiest was Hammurabi. Meanwhile the strongest opposing kingdom in the neighborhood was ruled from Larsa. Rim Sin, king of Larsa, who overcame the rival kingdom of Nisin, was in turn overcome by Hammurabi, about 2092 B. C. The situation was similar in certain respects to the times of Carthage and Rome. Hammurabi and his son Samsuiluna were for the next score or more years kings of Babylon and Larsa and emperors of a wide domain in Western Asia.

See *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, by M. Jastrow, Jr.

Philadelphia—J. B. Lippincott

A History of Babylon, by L. W. King.

New York—F. A. Stokes Co.

A History of Babylonia and Assyria, by R.W. Rogers, 2 vols, 6th *ed.*

New York—Methodist Book Concern.

Volumes 26 and 92, by Myres and Hogarth, in *The Home*

University Library, New York—H. Holt & Co.

B '15. 1, or Smith 252, is a very interesting legal settlement of the status of a boy whose education had been paid for by his grandfather. A full treatment of the document will be found in an article about to be published by the *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Chicago. (See Vol. xxxiv, 2, 135.)

It is customary in complete editions to provide transliterations of the cuneiform texts in Roman type for the use of Semitic scholars who do not read the cuneiform script readily. Such

transliterations bring the data quickly before the eye in its relation to Hebrew, Arabic and other Semitic tongues. Such a transliteration is here offered of Smith 253.

3 she gur	SAG Ishtar-ilu
1 (gur) 70 (ka)	^d Sin-mu-sha-lim
2 " "	Ibiq- ^d Sha-la
2 ¹ / ₃ sheqlê 7 ¹ / ₂ (she)	kaspim
⁵ sha	Ibiq- ^d Sha-la
1 (gur)	I-li-tu-ra-am
igi VI gál	kaspim
240 (ka) she sha	Li-ish-ta-lim (im) -ilu
1 (gur)	^d Sin-ra- ^t im-ûrim ^{ki}
¹⁰ 1 " "	^d Sin-sha-mu-uh
100 (ka)	Iz-kur- ^d Shamash
60 (ka)	Ga-ma-al- ^d Shamash
	10 (gur) 170 (ka) she gur
	2 ¹ / ₂ * sheqlê 7 ¹ / ₂ she kaspim
¹⁵ hu-bu-ul-lum	
sha Pi-ir-hu-um	
û ^d Shamash-mu-shi-zi-ib	
marê ^{mesh} ^d BIL. GIS -i-din-nam	
^{reverse} mi-it-ḥa-ri-ish a-ḥu-shu [] a-ḥi [	
²⁰ tam-karê ^{mesh} i-ip-pa-lu-ú	
maḥar Awil-ka- ^t bi	
^m ^d Sin-ri-é maḥar Ab-lum	
^m Za-ap-rum ^m ^d Shamash-rîṣu (ID. DAḤ).	
^m Ṣi-li- ^d Shamash ^m Nu-ur- ^d Nin-shubur	
²⁵ ^m ^d Sin-a-sha-ri-id	
^m Li- [ish-ta-] lim (im) -ilu	
uh-me ^{mesh} sha ^d Shamash	
kishib lu-enim-ma-bi ^{mesh} ib-ra	
warah addarum um 1 ^{kam}	
³⁰ mu sa-am-su-i-lu-na lugal-e	
alam ka-ne	
^d lamma gushkin ash-ash- [	

* sic

This document, said to have been found at Tell Habil Ibrahim, was made in the sixth year of the reign of Samsuiluna (king of Babylon, c 2080-2043 B. C.), on the first day of the twelfth month (Addarum). The first twelve lines give a list of obligations in grain and silver to various creditors. The totals are summed in lines 13 and 14. These obligations bore interest and are acknowledged by Pirhum and Shamash-mushizib, the sons of Gish-Bil-idinnam, who bear the debt equally (lines 15 to 20).

Nine witnesses are named and the sealing is noted. The clearest of the seals is that of a man whose name is not complete $\text{\textcircled{S}}\text{-li}^{\text{d}}$ [], meaning The Protection of the god [].

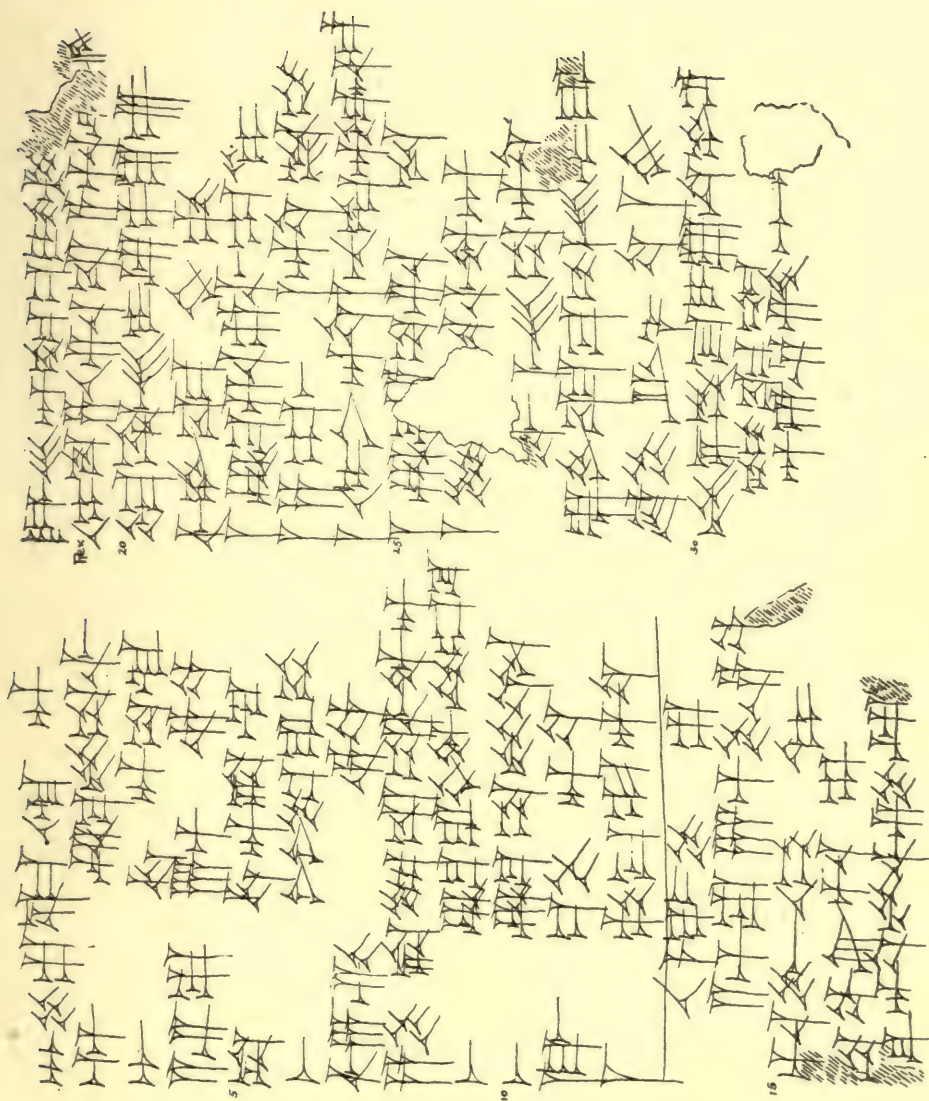
In line 24 the name of $\text{\textcircled{S}}\text{-li}^{\text{d}}$ Shamash appears, and this may have been his seal. Theoretically the witnesses pressed their seals on the clay document, but actually few of them did so or even but one of them. Occasionally a seal was used that bears a name not found in the document. As in modern times, the formal act of sealing was perhaps more important than the content of the seal. This is the more remarkable in Babylonian times, as the scribe who wrote its other contents inscribed on the tablet the names of the witnesses as well.

Smith 254 records a legal agreement concerning a patrimony, and involves the five sons of the deceased, their mother and her present husband. The inventory of property with accumulations is given, and the parties to the agreement promised never to contest the settlement. Oath was taken in the names of the gods Nannar, Shamash, and Maḥ (god of the city of Adab) and King Samsuiluna. Drawn up on the third day of the fourth month (Duzum) in the first year of the king's reign. This tablet was reported to have been picked up at Tell Habil Ibrahim.

B '15. 4, Smith 255. Translation.

¹ Two shekels of silver, ² a loan without interest, ³ from Mu-A-ni-tim, ⁴ A-ḥa-zu-nu-um ⁵ and Warad Nannar ⁶ have taken. ⁷ In case ⁸ the silver should not be forthcoming ⁹ [there is a pledge?] ¹⁰ [] Ri-mi-i-li, etc.

This tablet which is dated in the first year of the reign of King Rim Sin has the same principals as another on which the writer is at work which justifies the correction in the last two syllables of line four to -nu-um. Moreover in that other document the



syllabically written name in line three is written Me-É-na-ti-im, and the name in line ten is written Ri-im-i-li.

In my tentative restoration of line nine it will be seen that I suggest "shu-ni-a" as the transliteration, and agree in my translation of it, substantially, with Kohler and Ungnad, *Hammurabi's Gesetz*, Band III, 551, and Schorr, *Altbabylonische Rechtsurkunden* (1913), No. 159: 13. The beginning of line ten is uncertain, whether it was once the sign *igi* = "in the presence of" or the simple wedge which usually precedes a personal name. In the former case the translation of line nine would be strictly "there is (his) pledge," in the latter case "his pledge is" followed by the personal name in line ten.

It would hardly be fair to press the matter from a broken tablet, but if I am right, the rendering bears on the subject which I have treated elsewhere, of the sponsorship or personal guarantee, in contracts which involve the return of property loaned. (A paper read at Washington, D. C., by the writer before the American Oriental Society, April 25, 1916, "A New Archive from Old Larsa.")

See also Figulla 30: 1 and 72: 14 in *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlischen Museen zu Berlin*, Heft XIII.

Loans "without interest" are fairly common among the tablets of the period. It is possible that there was some well-understood regulation of such transactions or a compensation in advance to take care of the lender's profit.

Transliteration of (B. '15. 6) Smith 257.

^{m d} Nin-shubur-sha-a- [] mu-ni

ki A-bil-i-li-shu

ad-a-ni

^{m d} Shamash-ma-gir

nam mu I ^{kam} ib-ta-é-a

kisrum mu I ^{kam}

[I + ?] sheqlê kaspim

ni-lal-e

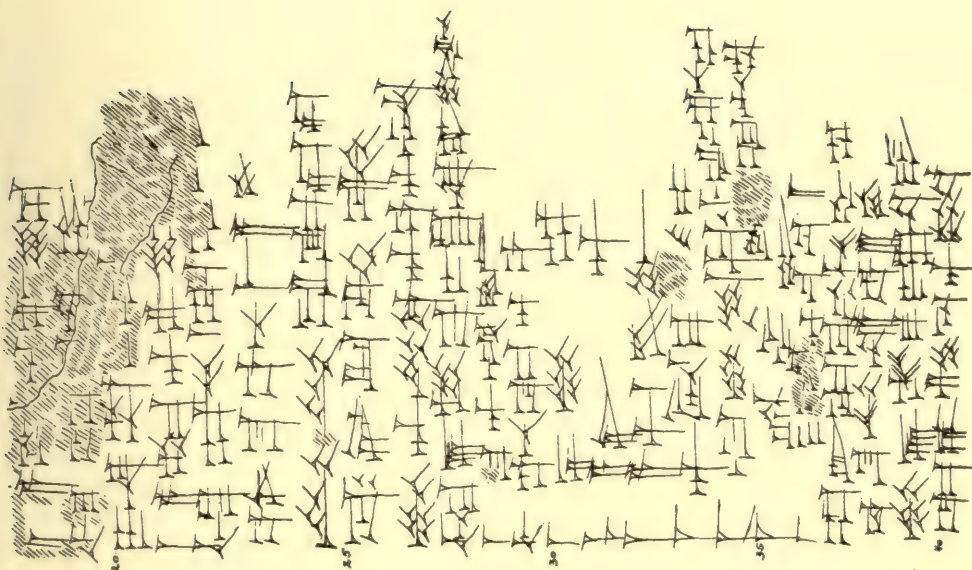
shàg-shu kisrum mu I ^{kam}

1 sheqel kaspim

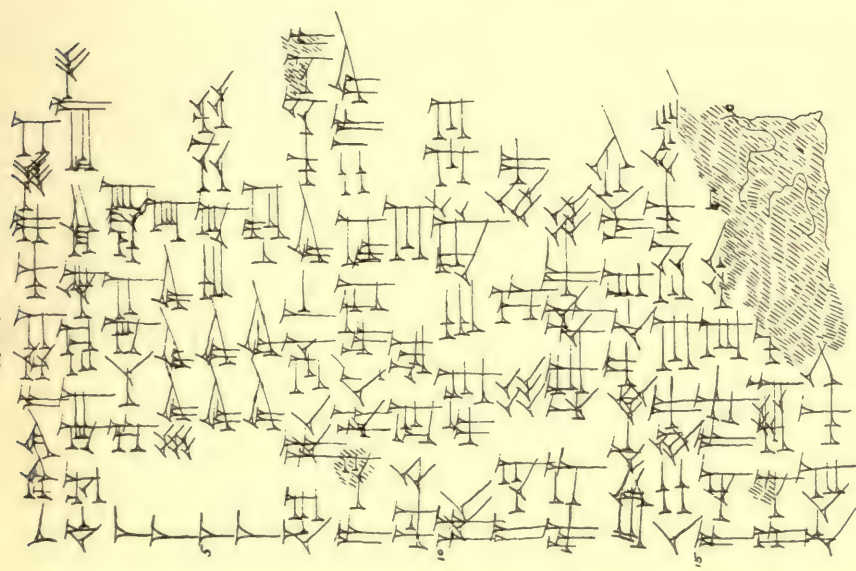
li-ku-ú

u-sha-ak ú-la ba-ash-shu-ú

Reverse



2574



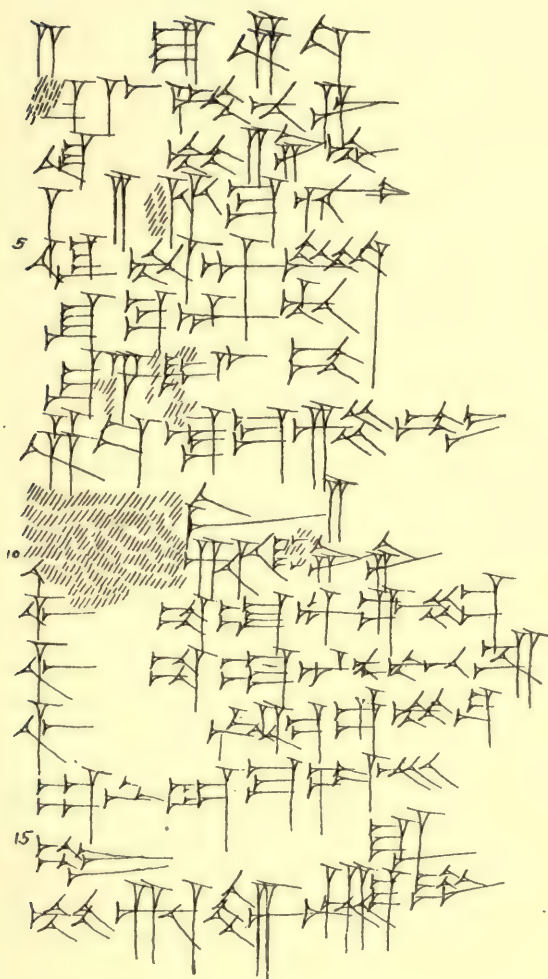
ki ma-ti-ma ú-ul ú-ba-ash-shu-ma
 i-na i-di-shu i-ti-li
 maḥar Ib-ku-Ishtar
 “ ^d Shamash-li- [
 waraḥ Simânum um 12 [
 mu Sa-am-su-i-lu-n[a
 urudu ki-lugal-gub

Smith 257 is an interesting document from the eighth year of King Samsuiluna. I incline to believe that the syllable broken away from the first line is the syllable “at” and that the person named was a woman. The interpretation is considerably affected by the sex of the broken name. If it be feminine the literal translation would be as follows:

Nin-shubur-sha-a- [] by name
 from Abil-ilishu
 her father,
 Shamash-magir
 for one year has hired
 the hire for one year
 [1 + ?] shekels of silver
 he will pay.
 The payment down (towards) one year
 one shekel of silver
 he (i. e. Abil-ilishu) has received.
 (This) is settled whether issue or not.
 In future, should there be no issue,
 he (i. e. Abil-ilishu) will forfeit his (remaining) pay.
 In the presence of Ibku-Ishtar
 “ “ “ “ Shamash-li- []
 Month Simânum, day the twelfth,
 Year (when) Samsuiluna (the king)
 (made) a bronze standard

That there was at least one more syllable in the first line is clear from the fact that the last two syllables, “mu-ni” (= by name), which belong to the first line are crowded a little below the line and under the broken space.

255



If, however, the name was a masculine, the significance would be that the man was hired from his father. In that case the use of the verb *bashû* is anomalous.

Documents of lease or hire are numerous, and their terms well known. This contract has a double forfeiture provision. In case the expectation of Shamash-magir is disappointed no further payment will be made to Abil-ilishu, but no refund of the deposit will be made to Shamash-magir. I think that Shamash-magir hoped for an heir. For such reasons I incline to the opinion that the name in the first line is a feminine, and that the interpretation suggested should follow.

B '15. 7 and 8, Smith 258 and 259, are from the archive of a man named Shamash-e-mu-ga-a-a, and concern money loaned. They are dated in the reign of King Samsuiluna, the first and eleventh years respectively.

B '15. 9, Smith 260, is a more significant document, having a bearing upon religious and social questions of the age. Ib-ni-Adad, the father of Beltani, has consecrated her as a sacred woman to his God Adad, presumably in the Adad temple, with a stipend of five shekels, and it is agreed that she shall inherit equally with any of her brothers from the paternal estate. Furthermore, Shamash-mu-tab-bil is confirmed as the son of Beltani.

The many interesting questions involved in this tablet are being discussed with interest by scholars in connection with the great Hammurabi law-code found in Persia seventeen years ago by the French explorer, De Morgan. (See the first article in *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, October, 1917, by Dr. Luckenbill.)

B '15. 10, Smith 261, records the lease of a house for one year by Sin-e-ri-ba-am, the son of Sin-mu-sha-lim, from Abil-i-li-shu, the owner. The lease is to date from the forenoon (line 1) of the 20th of the month Duzum (the fourth month) in the 28th year of King Samsuiluna (a slight variant of that important date formula).

B '15. 11, Smith 262, from the 37th year of King Ammiditana of Babylon, second in succession after Samsuiluna, a transaction in silver which makes specific reference to the royal law on the subject.

Handwritten musical notation on yellowed paper, featuring various symbols and numbers (5, 10, 15) indicating measures or sections.

ki-ma ši-im-da-at shar-ri (line 9).

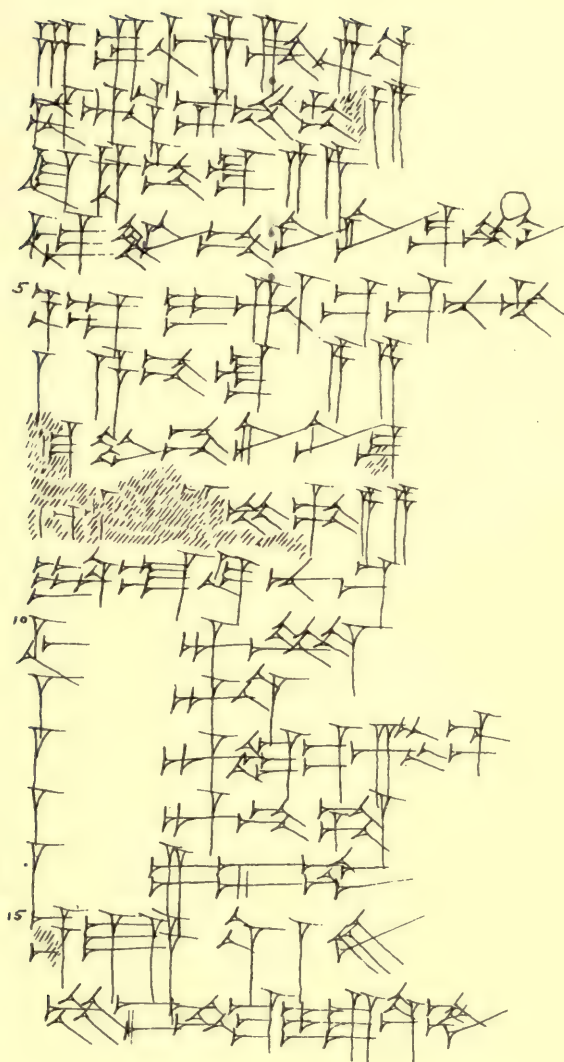
The very coarse seal of the first witness Ta-ri-ba-tum was stamped on the tablet twice between the 12th and 13th lines, but only the first two syllables of the name made any impression, thus TA-RI: TA-RI. Traces of a smaller, finer seal, that of Gimil-ib-ni, one of the principals, are discernible on the tablet.

B '15. 12, Smith 263, is an interesting list of names. It dates from the 28th year of King Samsuiluna, one of the rarer date formulæ. (Chiera, *Legal and Administrative Documents from Nippur*, Philadelphia, 1914, p. 67.)

B '15. 13, Smith 264, dated in the reign of Abi-eshu', the son and successor of Samsuiluna (2042 to 2015 B. C.), records the agreement between the owner of a field and a farmer to work the ground on shares for one year. As the document is drawn the owner appears first as the lord (owner) of the field, and then, jointly with the farmer, he appears as the lessee of the field from himself as lessor.

The following transliteration of the body of the tablet may be of interest to Semitic students:

a-shàg ma-la ba-ṣu-u
a-shàg she-gish-ni ù she-im
a-shàg Ḫa-di-me (me)-ir-^d Shamash
ki Ḫa-di-me (me)-ir-^d Shamash
⁵ be-el a-shàg
^{m d} Im-shar-ri-ili
ù Ḫa-di-me (me)-ir-^d Shamash
a-na tap-pu-tim a-na mu i ^{kam}
ib-ta-è-a
¹⁰ shi-it-ti-in
^{m d} Im-shar-ri-ili
i-sha-ka-an
ish-ti-a-at
^m Ḫa-di-me (me)-ir-^d Shamash
¹⁵ i-sha-ka-an-ma
ud ebur-shu she-gish-ni ù she-im
a-wi-lum ma-la a-wi-lim
i-za-az



B '15. 14, Smith 265. This short document with figured sealings dated in the first (?) year of Samsuiluna records that ^d Adad-be-el-i-lì, the son of She-bi-Ishtar, has taken over a certain date garden of one-third of a gan extent and yielding a crop of thirty gin of dates; the garden adjoins the property of Sin-a-ḫi-i-din-nam.

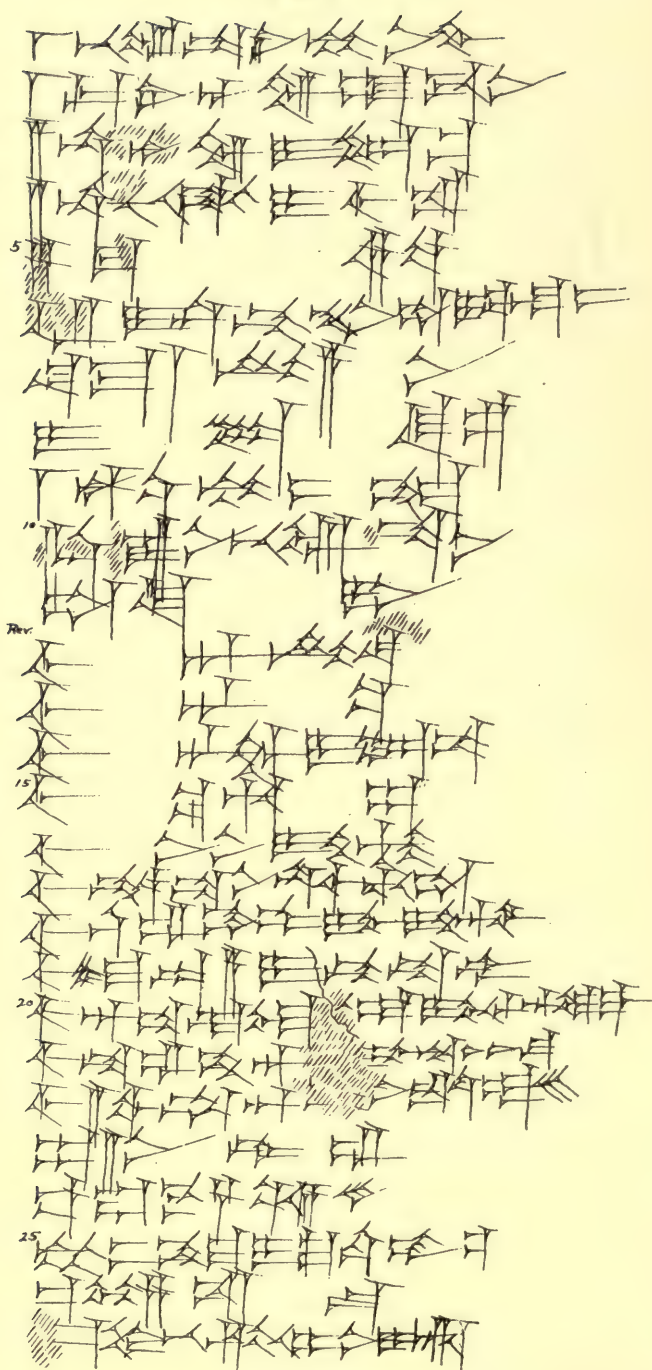
TRANSLITERATION.

$\frac{1}{3}$ gan gish-shar 30 gin ka-lum bilti-bi ush-sa-du ^d Sin-a-ḫi-i-din-nam ^m ^d Im-be-el-i-lì mar She-bi-Ishtar iṣ-ba-at a-na pi-ḫa-at ka-lum bi-shu iz-za-az.

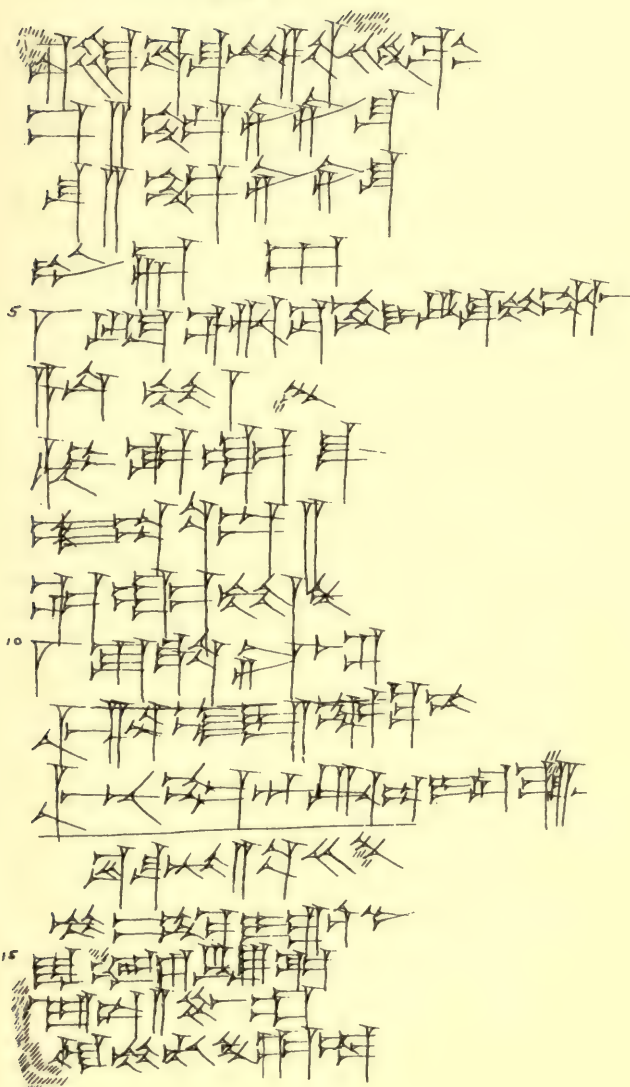
No witnesses appear. Probably there was once a case or envelope for this tablet which bore the names of witnesses.

B '15. 15, Smith 266, and B '15. 18, Smith 269, said to come from Abu Hatab and Abu Khameez, respectively, were written in the reign of King Rim Sin of Larsa, and are important, since they fix the date formula contained in them. Moreover, both mention a city of Warad-Sin (alu ^{ki} Warad-^dSin). King Warad Sin was the brother of Rim Sin and his predecessor on the throne of Larsa. The documents are dated within nine days of each other.

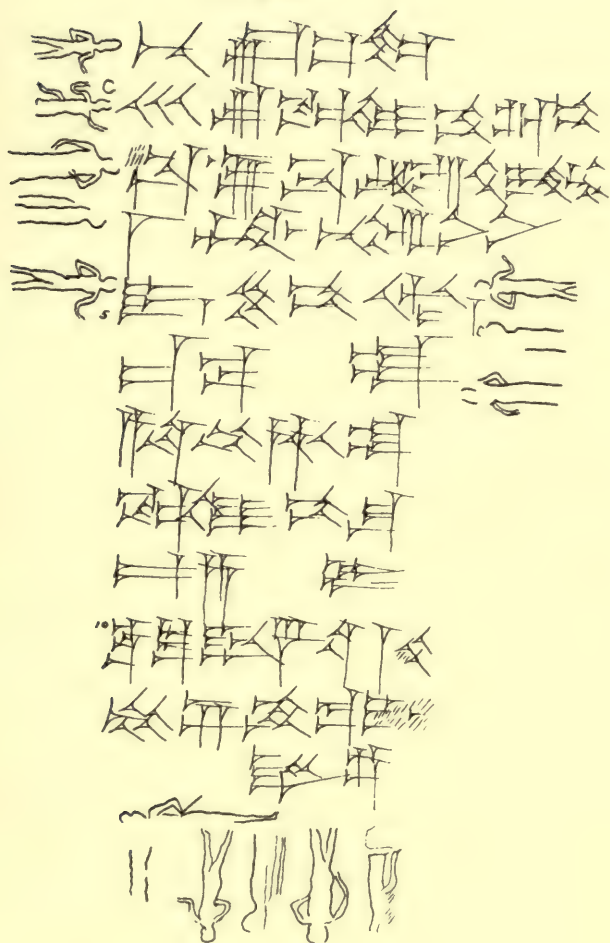
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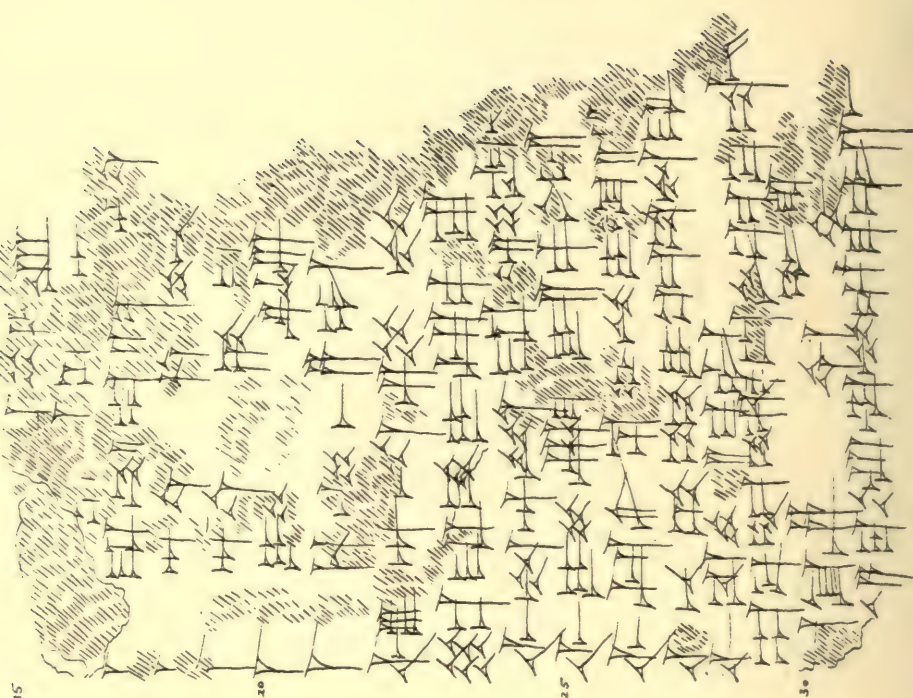
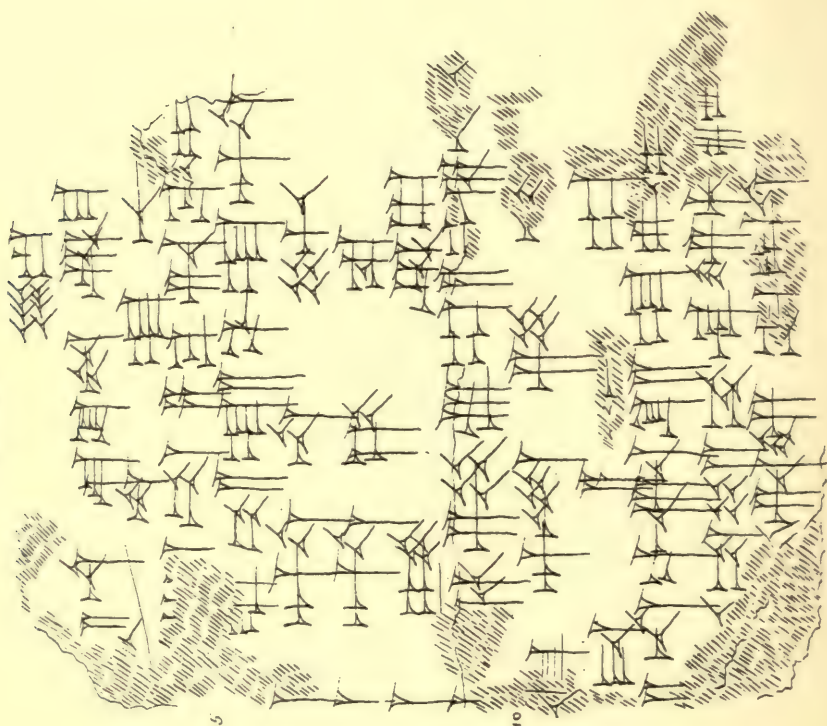


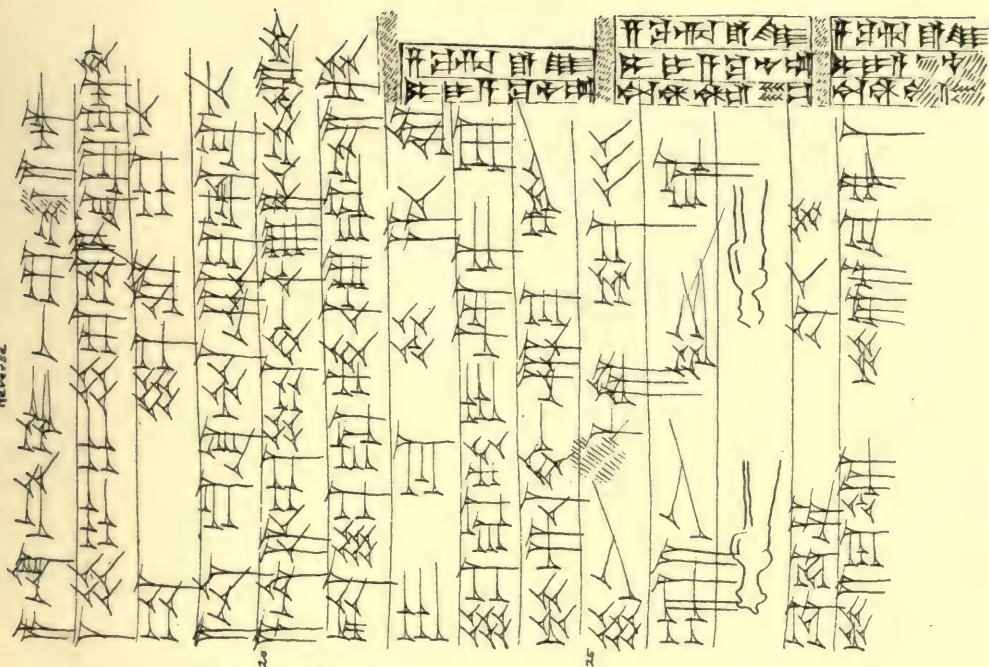
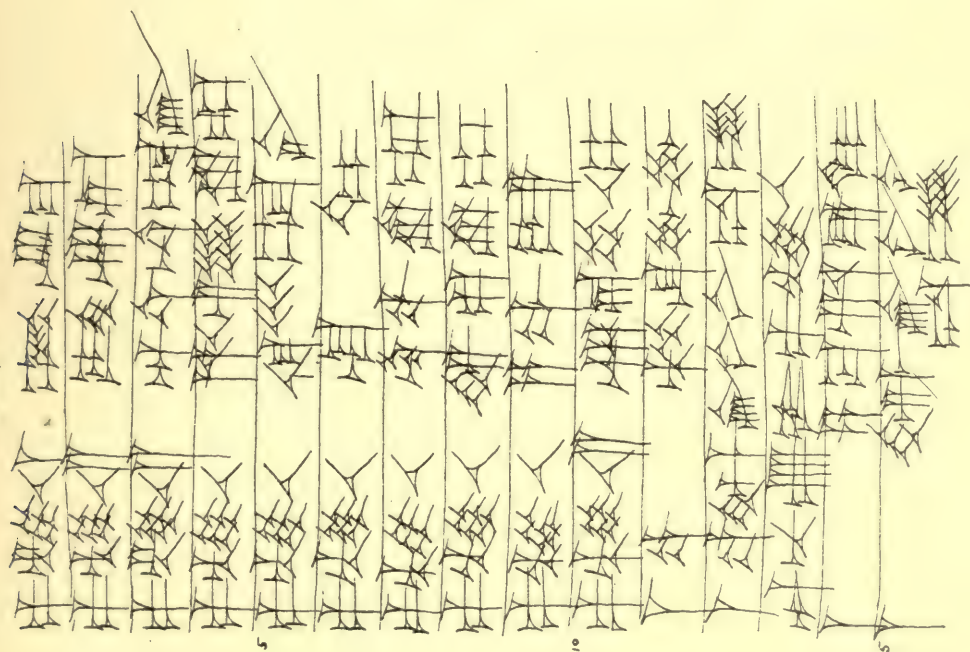
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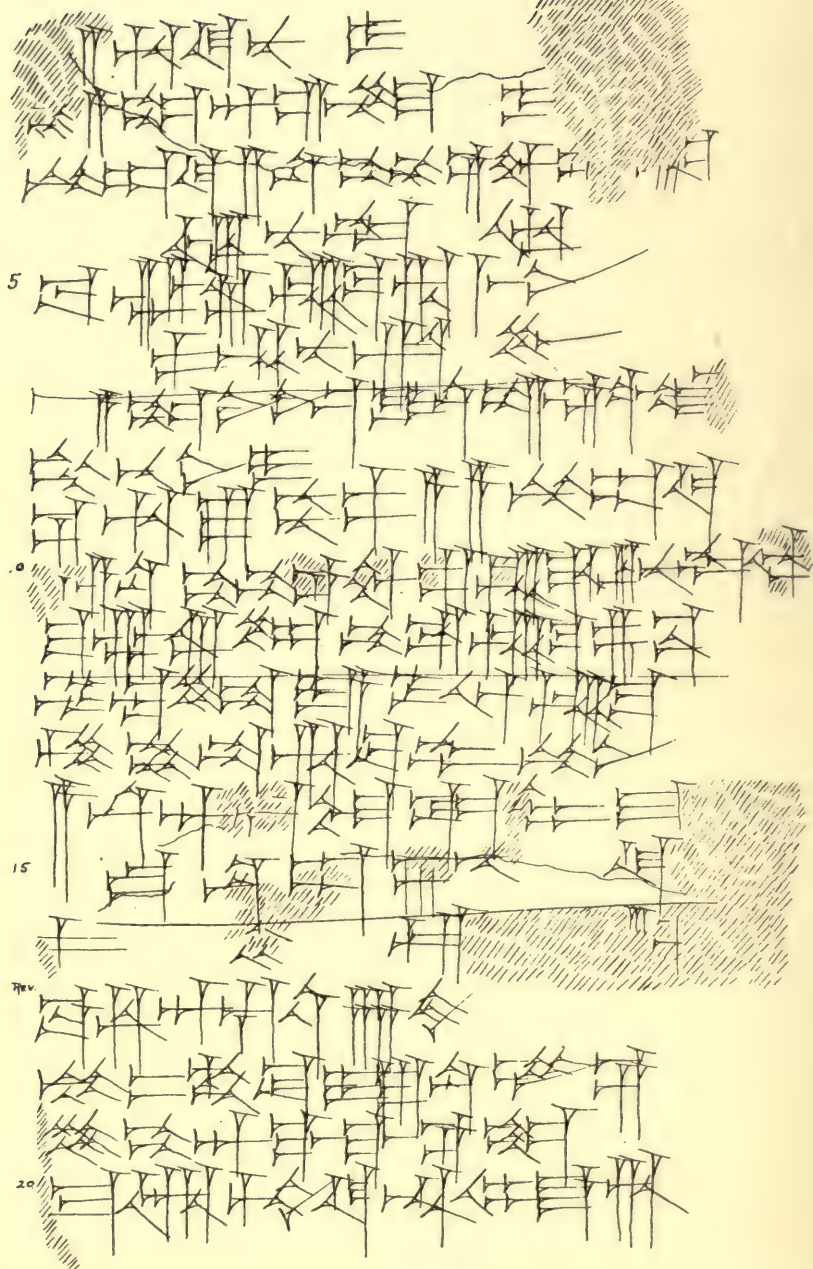


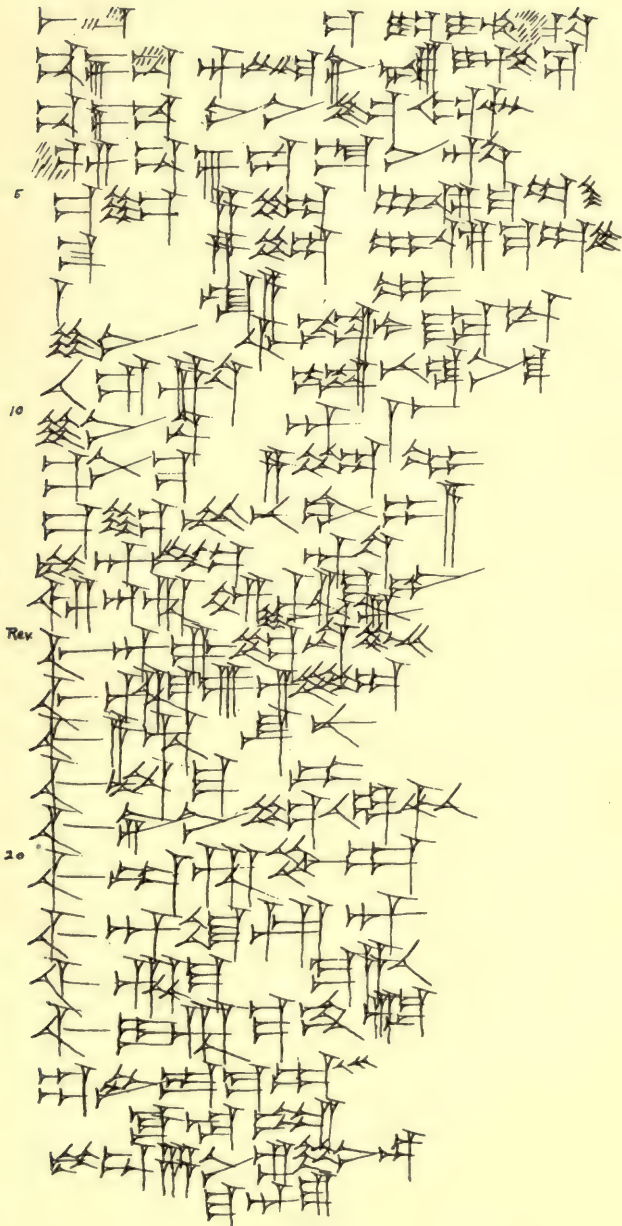
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Handwritten musical notation on a page with a grid. The notation consists of various symbols, including vertical lines, horizontal lines, and stylized characters, arranged in rows. The page is numbered 10 and 15. The word "Reverse" is written vertically on the left side.





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